

THE RISKS THAT FOREIGN LABOR POSES  
TO UAE NATIONAL SECURITY

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
General Studies

by

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## ABSTRACT

THE RISKS THAT FOREIGN LABOR POSES TO UAE NATIONAL SECURITY, by  
Major Ahmed Alzaabi, 90 pages.

The discovery of oil in the United Arab Emirates has resulted in a new era in which demographic, economic, social and political transformations have occurred rapidly. Moreover, the supply of oil has increased the strategic importance of the UAE. Expatriate laborers have contributed greatly in the development process in the UAE; however, the UAE must start to study the negative and positive impacts of those laborers with regard to its national security. The existence of foreign laborers in large numbers in the UAE has many social, political and cultural implications as well as implications on demographics, which exceeded all reasonable boundaries when it reached up to 80 percent of the UAE population. UAE citizens have become a minority in their own country, 18.5 percent. This thesis will study The Risks that Foreign Labor poses to UAE National Security demographic, economic, social and political.

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## ACRONYMS

GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
MOI	Ministry of Interior
UAE	United Arab Emirates
US	United States

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Oil was discovered in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in the early 1960s in the Emirate of Sharjah. However, it was not discovered in commercial amounts in the other Emirates at that time. After this discovery of oil, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) witnessed a new era of development and prosperity. When the United Kingdom, declared its withdrawal from the Arabian Gulf, other western countries started competing with one another in order to obtain rights to oil privileges.

After the declaration of the union between the Emirates on the 2nd of December 1971, oil returns were directed toward the comprehensive development of the UAE. Following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, oil prices and consumption rates increased rapidly. Over time, the income of the UAE citizens became the highest of all annual income rates in the world reaching \$33,000 in 2007.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequently, Emirati lifestyles have changed, becoming more luxurious, and less dependent on themselves, while becoming more dependent on others doing their daily tasks because of the lack of qualified and sufficient human manpower needed for managing these huge resources. Moreover, the Emiratis' perspective of life and work values has dramatically changed as the acceptance of strangers (housemaids, drivers, nannies, etc.) became all too common among households.

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<sup>1</sup>*Al Bayan Newspaper*, 19 November 2006, no. 9742, 6.

The new lifestyles of Emiratis made them avoid doing honorable handicrafts; claiming that these livelihoods do not suit their new social status. These behaviors, coupled with the lack of a qualified local workforce, led to the flow of foreign migrants to the UAE from all around the world. The excessive influx of expatriate migrants has caused great problems for the UAE as the government over the years, did not place regulatory controls with which to moderate the flow.

### A New Era

The discovery of oil in the UAE was the ingress to a new era in which it has witnessed several demographic, economic, social, and political developments. It has also resulted in a stronger strategic status and a greater value to the international agenda. The fast-paced development in the UAE has primarily relied on foreign labor. Foreign laborers, mainly from the Indian sub-continent and the Philippines, were brought to the country to participate in the operation of the many developmental programs and various different infrastructure projects. Those projects required a great number of laborers of different specializations, which were not available among UAE nationals. As time passed, the number of foreign laborers has increased significantly and it is estimated to be in the millions. This increase had both positive and negative effects. Years later, the expatriate labor achieved the “implied” goal for which they strove; such as the building of critical infrastructure all around the UAE. Now, the need to reconsider the impacts in the UAE arises because of the increasing negative effects their existence brings upon the country. In addition, the fact that they now form around 80 percent of the total population

has caused the citizens of the UAE to become a minority in their own country (UAE citizens comprise approximately 20 percent of the population).<sup>2</sup>

No one can deny the important role the foreign laborers have played in the economic development of the UAE; however, the great dependence on foreign laborers in the migrant worker aspects of life, such as housemaids, drivers, gardeners, chefs, and blue collar workers, has led to a condition of imbalance whereby native citizens find themselves subjected to the criminal trends particular to the lower classes of society.

Many security challenges have also emerged. These threats, which were almost non-existent many years back, such as drugs, money laundering, criminal gangs that murder and steal, and organized crimes, are rampant in the UAE today. There must be a long-term national strategy which enables UAE citizens to have greater control of their fortunes in line with the dictum that “there is no real and sound development in any nation or community without the participation of its own people.”

The restoration of national security is a prerequisite for creating a suitable environment for the security of its citizens, companies and organizations. Current trends call for drastic measures to be taken in order to secure its citizens and to prevent the growth of on-going illicit activities.

Other trends brought about by foreign workers include illegal and violent labor strikes which disrupt the security and economy of the country. Also, as a result of international pressures, treaties, conventions and regulations are forged, all of which grant foreign laborers additional rights not afforded to UAE nationals. For instance,

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<sup>2</sup>Al Khaleej Center for Strategic Researches and Studies, “The Foreign Labors in GCC,” 2006, 6,

migrant taxi and bus drivers went on strike because they did not want to pay the fines of the traffic citations for which they were responsible. These unfair trends have heightened the tensions between natives and foreigners living side-by-side in the UAE.

These issues, both risks and challenges, must be directly addressed, albeit delicately, before a spark ignites a flame. Strategies must be revised, and mechanisms must be put in action in order to reform the “status quo” of the UAE in an effort to bring equality to all citizens, and to prevent further escalation of illegal and illicit activities; all of which threaten the nation’s security and livelihoods.

### The Expatriate Labor Problem

#### The Discovery of Oil and the Growth of the Expatriate Labor Force

After the establishment of the union between the Emirates on 2 December 1971, and the increased flow of oil, oil revenues were directed toward the comprehensive development of the state’s infrastructure. As oil consumption around the world increased, so did the salaries of UAE citizens, averaging almost \$33,000 per year in 2007.<sup>3</sup> As the Emiratis’ social lifestyles tended to be more luxurious, they looked to outsiders (migrant workers) to accomplish many of the daily household and community tasks as they (Emiratis) went about trying to manage the country’s vast resources.

The new changes in social lifestyles made most UAE citizens turn away from many “decent” jobs now deemed as inappropriate for their new social status. Thus, the expatriate labor force grew rapidly and was comprised of people of various nationalities. As the demand for migrant labor grew, the UAE government did not have appropriate

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<sup>3</sup>*Al Bayan Newspaper*, 19 November 2006, no. 9742, 6.

laws and regulations to control the influx of foreign labor to the country. The overriding goal was the need to have a migrant work force that was able to keep pace with the rapid development within the UAE, while continuing to provide public and essential services to all of its citizens.

### The Need for Expatriate Labor

The UAE, being a newly established state in the 1960s, had a great need for a variety of expatriate labor skill sets in order to build its infrastructure while maintaining key public and essential services. As a result, the state was forced to import the expatriate labor at a frantic rate. The government's spending on services and critical infrastructure included:

1. Infrastructure facilities such as energy stations, airports, seaports, mass transit, water and sewage projects, and modern communication systems.
2. Educational and health institutions throughout the emirate.
3. Vital equipment, supplies, and materials needed for industry.

Given the complexity of keeping, maintaining, and operating key services during rapid growth, the burst of migrant worker immigration, with limited constraints, brought with it "much baggage" as the UAE government sought every opportunity to maintain its social well being.

### The Historical Development of the Expatriate Labor Force

The expatriate labor population has increased steadily but dramatically over the past fifty years. Demographic data reveals that the population of UAE at the beginning of the 1960s was 220,000. In 1970, the number jumped to 450,000 of which only 56 percent

were UAE citizens. By the year 2000, the population was three million and the percentage of UAE citizens had dropped to only 20 percent.<sup>4</sup> Today, the population is estimated to be approximately 4,650,000; of this, only 1 million are UAE natives. According to the *Arabian Times*, there are 1 million expatriate workers from India alone. The remainder of the expatriate work force comes from Pakistan, Philippines, Southeast Asia, other Arab countries, and Europe.<sup>5</sup> All total, since 1940, the expatriate work force in the UAE come from 140 different countries from around the world.

The historical development of the expatriate work force can be summarized in four distinct periods or stages:

1st Stage: Stage one ran from the beginning of the 1960s through the beginning of the 1970s. This stage was characterized by the influx of the expatriates, consisting mostly of Arab descent, in limited numbers. The UAE benefited from their experiences in helping to build the foundations of the country. Some experts estimate that the number of foreign inhabitants during this period numbered around 200,000.<sup>6</sup>

2nd Stage: Started by the sharp increase of oil prices in the 1970s. It was characterized by the huge number of expatriate workers who entered the UAE. As the 1980 census reveals, the number of foreign inhabitants doubled in the period 1970 to 1975 and it doubled again in 1980 as the percentage of the expatriate workforce increased

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<sup>4</sup>The Studies Unit , *Gulf Newspaper*, the Demographic Imbalance in the UAE during 30 Years.

<sup>5</sup>*Arabian Times*, December 2004, 7.

<sup>6</sup>Al Khaleej Center for Strategic Researches and Studies, *The Demographical Situation of the GCC* (UAE: Abu Dhabi, 2005).



to 62 percent. The makeup of the expatriate labor force at that time was predominantly of Arab and Asian descent.<sup>7</sup>

3rd Stage: This stage began in the 1980s as oil prices and revenues dropped sharply. During this period, the average growth of expatriate labor in the UAE decreased sharply; with annual growth averaging 8 percent through the first five years, 1980 to 1985, and dropping to 3.1 percent by the end of the decade. The 3rd stage was characterized by the rapid increase of the numbers of the Asian expatriate laborers who were afforded opportunities in the UAE in large part because of their low cost salary demands.<sup>8</sup>

4th Stage: Includes the period following the first Gulf War until current day. This period is best characterized by small growth in the expatriate workforce; which averaged 3 percent growth from 1990 to 2002. In addition, the Asian expatriate workforce widely increased, especially after the expanded tensions among the Gulf countries, causing Arab expatriates in the UAE to depart following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. By 1993, the expatriate labor force in the UAE numbered 2.184 million and comprised 80 percent of the UAE's population. This decrease is a contrast to 1990, when the expatriate population was 89 percent; the difference being the exodus of Arab expatriates. By 2003, the percentage increased again, albeit slightly, and the UAE expatriate population became the highest among all Arab Gulf Countries; leveling out at 82 percent of the population.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ministry of Economy, *Economic and Social Developments in the UAE* (Abu Dhabi, 2005).

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>"Foreign Labor in the GCC," *Al Arabia Space Channel*, 2011.

## Factors behind the Evolution and the Increase in Expatriate Labor

While there are several factors which forced the UAE to depend on expatriate labor, the increased growth was not without mixed consequences. Contributing factors included:

1. The financial boom following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War boosted the price of oil. The income from oil exports jumped from 1.58 to 6.57 billion dollars while oil revenues increased from \$900 million in 1973, to \$5,536 million in 1974; an increase of around 15.1 percent.<sup>10</sup> This boom pushed the UAE government to adopt ambitious developmental plans which focused on building schools, hospitals, airports, universities, roads and bridges, and other projects necessary for keeping pace with the economic boom. Rapid growth led to the increase in demand for expatriate labor. Still, the oil boom was not the only reason behind importing the great numbers of expatriate workers. Other reasons included:

2. The low number of Emirati citizens eligible for the workforce. The lack of the qualified and trained UAE natives prevented the government from executing its developmental plans. Thus, hiring expatriates was not only more expeditious, but also more cost effective as the expatriate labor force did not need training, sought lower salaries, were far more productive, and were much more qualified.<sup>11</sup>

3. Native local workers refused to work in certain technical jobs; leaving expatriate laborers as the only recourse for the UAE government. UAE citizens looked

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<sup>10</sup>Fotoh Abu Dahab Haikal, *Gulf Affairs Magazine* no. 16 (May 2000), 14.

<sup>11</sup>Mohamad Shahat Abdulghani, "Foreign Labor in the GCC," *Al Khalij Center for Strategic Researches* no. 41 (2005), 87.

down at certain jobs, in large part because of old social and cultural beliefs and stigmas. Instead, they preferred to work in administration and in government supervised companies because of job security, higher salaries, lucrative pensions, limited working hours, leave, and less work pressure. In addition, the private sector leadership avoided hiring locals because it lacked confidence in their qualifications, productivity, and salary demands; though this notion has begun to change in recent years.<sup>12</sup>

4. The difference between the educational outputs and work market needs also played a role in the need for expatriate labor. Despite the large number of UAE college graduates each year, these graduates lacked the necessary qualifications for low density labor; rather, most (if not all) qualified for administrative and ministerial positions. As such, a shortage in qualified workers in the private work sector grew larger and larger. The age demographics and cultural make-up of the Emirati society was also a factor that led to an increased expatriate work force. Despite the fact that the population of Emiratis is continually increasing, the age demographics and gender do not support the labor force's needs. First, young people, less than 15 years of age, constitute 43 percent of the UAE population and are not eligible (due to their age) to fill skilled labor positions. Second, women comprise the other sector of the UAE population and in most cases are prohibited from working in large part due to cultural traditions. Despite the large number of women who graduate annually, only 13.7 percent are included in the total workforce.<sup>13</sup>

5. Visa Trading. Prominent UAE businessmen with influential ties to government officials were able to obtain quick issuance of entry visas for a great number of workers

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<sup>12</sup>Hassan Mohammed Hassan, *Gulf Affairs Magazine*, no. 24 (2001), 96.

<sup>13</sup>"Foreign Labor in the GCC," *Al Arabia Space Channel*, 2011.

in order to continue growth and meet the demand for skilled labor. This practice led to the presence of illegal alien workers and created (quickly) an imbalance in the UAE demographic structure.

6. The incompatible work environments. The UAE suffers from the lack of local staff employees who are able to fill advanced positions in the different institutes and private sector companies. This is due to the fact that most of the locals work in government ministries and companies owned and managed by the government. Thus, the fill for this void falls in the hands of expatriates, who fulfill the requirements in the fields of industry, consultancy, and commerce. This disparity has led to inconsistencies between the privileges given to the expatriates; especially the westerner and Arab expatriates compared to Asian and Indian expatriates. The shortage of local private sector staff, led to an influx of Arab, British, American, French, and German experts and consultants who became the main and most influential points of contact among UAE members serving in the different ministries; particularly, oil, transportation and marketing. While these expatriates enjoyed great job benefits, which they greatly protected, some made efforts to prevent the employment of locals and keep these benefits within their own circle of friends. In a study done by the UAE Ministry of Work, the percentage of local workforce is 3 percent of the total workforce in the country due in large part by the protections established through nepotism or favoritism in the expatriate rank and file.<sup>14</sup>

A report issued by Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce indicated that though western and Arab expatriates found themselves in positions of management and supervision, Asian expatriates comprised the bulk of the work force and consisted of:

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<sup>14</sup>Field Study. "The Youth and the Work Market," UAE, February 2005.

Indian expatriates, 62 percent; Pakistani expatriates, 10 percent; East Asian expatriates, 13 percent; Arab expatriates, 11 percent; and other nationalities, 4 percent.<sup>15</sup>

### The Negative Effects of the Ex-Patriot Workforce

The high flow of expatriate labor to the UAE has had several negative effects that have been felt on many levels of UAE society. These include:

1. The impact on the society's values; namely, education, work, housing, and consumerism.
2. High crime rates; unemployed often suffer from psychological disturbances because of unemployment and there is a strong relationship between unemployment and crime.
3. Weakened loyalty to society and family; as individuals lose opportunities, ambitions are lessened and self-esteem falls, as many feel they are looked upon negatively by their societies.
4. Drug abuse; unemployment often leads to frustration and the desire to run away from reality, prompting many individuals to start taking drugs.<sup>16</sup>
5. The increase of spinsterhood. In 2003, 170,000 UAE women who were over thirty years old were not married.<sup>17</sup> The impact of spinsterhood has no doubt decreased

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<sup>15</sup>Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce, *The Effects of Money International Transfers on the National Economy* (Abu Dhabi: Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce, 2008).

<sup>16</sup>Ministry of Interior, Planning General Headquarters The Statistical Group 27. *The Annual Crimes Report* (Abu Dhabi 2006).

<sup>17</sup>Dr. Ahmad Mattar Abdullah, *The Reality of Demography* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Researches and Studies, 2007).

fertility rates in the UAE, at a time when the country needs to increase the number of citizens in order to correct the population disorder.

### Scope

This thesis will address the threat that foreign labor poses to UAE national security, and the impacts that this issue has on the demographic, economic, political, social, and cultural aspects of UAE society. In addition, this thesis will discuss the need for the UAE to propose strategies for addressing these issues and threats while minimizing the impact on UAE citizens and their way of life. The format of the research will include five distinctive chapters.

Chapter 1 is an overview of the research topic. It spells out the primary and secondary research questions, the assumptions, and defines the terms that the researcher will use. Chapter 1 also cites the limitation and delimitations, the significance of study, and conclusion and significance of the study.

Chapter 2 lays out the forms of literature that are being used in the study. It addresses the problem from the perspectives of other authors, researchers, and scholars. Finally, it emphasizes the need for the study to be undertaken in addition to works that have already been published.

Chapter 3 addresses the research methodology and design; namely, the steps taken by the researcher to obtain information necessary to answer the primary and secondary questions.

Chapter 4 is the analysis of the issue. In chapter 4, the researcher presents his findings while answering the primary and secondary questions; laying the groundwork for a logical conclusion.

Chapter 5 provides a general conclusion and recommendation. Using the analysis in chapter 4, the researcher makes a recommendation for additional study, research, and actions that should be taken on the topic.

#### Primary Research Question

How has the growth of expatriates in the UAE impacted the security and stability of the UAE?

#### Secondary Research Questions

In order to address the research question, the following secondary questions must be answered:

1. Is there a relationship between demographics and national security?  
(A) What is the definition of national security? (B) What are the effects of demographics on national security?
2. Are there any threats of foreign labor on UAE national security? (A) What are the threats of foreign labor on the political and economic security of the UAE? (B) What are the threats of foreign labor on the UAE social security and culture?
3. Does the UAE recognize the need to address the threat of foreign labor?

#### Significance

The significance of this research emerges from current trends that threaten UAE national security. These trends are multi-faceted; political, social, and economic. The issue of foreign labor in the UAE has become very complicated. On the one hand, the foreign laborers are important for the development of the country and its economy. On the other hand, they have outnumbered the UAE national population in a way that clearly

jeopardizes the spirit of nationalism within the host nation. The research will also provide suggestions on how to minimize the negative effects of foreign labor and to provide a suitable alternative to protect the UAE national security from factors that undermine its stability and security.

### Assumptions

Various assumptions which impact this research include:

1. The problem of the foreign labor will not be solved in the near future.
2. Unplanned economic growth will increase the growth of foreign labor.
3. International economic impacts make the UAE government more aware of this problem.

### Limitations

The current research discusses sensitive matters that are of great importance to the UAE national security and in time derived to complete the research; many works will not be made available. Other limitations include:

1. No accurate statistics regarding the UAE demography.
2. The difficulty of obtaining information relevant to security issues or the organizations which form a threat to the UAE security (for instance, the terrorist organizations).
3. There are not enough reliable sources for information regarding this topic (the references that discuss the topic, if found, are general or sometimes controversial).



### Delimitations

The study shall limit itself to the period from 1970 to 2010 in order to reign in the scope of the research topic.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many books and a number of articles written on the topic of expatriates in the UAE. The researcher attended several discussions and seminars held specifically to discuss this problem in the Emirates Strategic Researches Center. Also, the UAE Staff College encourages many officers to research this field and write on this subject as well. The researcher also interviewed some federal government and non-government officials who had some valuable information in this regard; one included an official of the United Nations Development Program; another was the Undersecretary of the UAE Ministry of Labor. In addition, the researcher benefited from the information and statistics provided by other research centers and federal government libraries such as the libraries of Abu Dhabi Police College and Ministry of Economy.

The literature for this thesis is vast and diverse. As such, the researcher intends to categorize it into various subsets. The categories will be explained in a bit more detail in this chapter in order for the reader first to better understand the literature, and second to comprehend its use for the conduct of the research.

The first category includes works and-or reports that are peculiar to the topic of expatriates published by the UAE government officials at some time (before, during, or after) the ascribed period being researched. These reports illustrate both the successes brought to the UAE by the skilled work of expatriates, as well as some of the adverse consequences of their presence.

The second category is comprised of works formulated by researchers and organizations who have studied the UAE dating back to 1970 and who have published various writings and other reports based on their research.

The third category is that of papers, reports, and journals that have been produced by various organizations (to include the media). Specific to this third category are those periodicals or documentaries that have brought light to the international community of this particular topic.

### Government Reports

The various reports published by UAE Government Agencies provide sources of accountability and background images of critical information that is useful for the purpose of this research. Most notably, the UAE Ministry of Economics, and (at the local level) Chambers of Commerce are resources for economic development and social justice. In addition, agencies such as the Ministry of Interior (MOI), Critical Infrastructure Authority, and local police agencies, depict the flavor of perceived “threats” versus “actual” events captured during periods of time (such as quarterly-annual reports, etc.).

Economic and statistical reports published by the UAE’s Ministry of Economics supports the researcher’s ability to measure economic growth and capital. In particular, these measurements best support the research when separated into various subsets pertaining to expatriates and UAE nationals; lending to a quantifiable point of research.

The UAE MOI’s strategic vision is “to work effectively toward making the UAE one of the safest and most secure countries in the world.” Its objectives to this end are to deliver safety and security, ensure readiness, maintain public confidence, invest in our

people, use resources effectively, work in partnerships and promote innovation.<sup>18</sup> The MOI's reports on these objectives support the researcher's endeavor to define the parameters of national and internal security in the form of policies, programs and initiatives.

Coupled with these security parameters, are reports rendered by agencies such as the Critical Infrastructure Authority and other local police agencies whose reports provide measurable data that spell out incidents which are construed as national security threats and incidents.

### Research and Organizational Reports

Research and organizational reports are the best sources which indicate trends (and the impacts of various trends) on various societies (and sectors within those societies). While in many countries around the world, the foreign work force are often the silent voice in society, thus, rendering them little means by which to influence the direction of society and its growth, the exact opposite holds true in the UAE.

Dr. Sama Sulaiman's study titled *Social and Cultural Effects of Foreign Labor* spells out the socio-political costs of foreign labor.<sup>19</sup> While foreign labor in the UAE is found mainly in oil production, engineering, and heavy industry, their relevance toward political and economic development makes them a crucial element of UAE growth.

Still too, other field studies, such as "Youth and the Market, Realities and Challenges," raise obscure questions as to the "true impacts" of a foreign workforce on a

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<sup>18</sup>Ministry of Interior of the UAE, *Strategic Vision*, 2010.

<sup>19</sup>Sama Sulaiman, *Social and Cultural Effects of Foreign Labor* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Researches and Studies, 2005).

society.<sup>20</sup> Whereas in most western nations the foreign labor market rarely disrupts the status quo, expatriates in the UAE assume greater significance in influencing the country's political course and economic direction. In the UAE, expatriates are more than merely economic agents (or means to an end) in large part to their enduring privileges granted via various reforms and national referendums. Herein lies the disruption in the status quo where "challenges" found in recent studies need to be fully analyzed, and hopefully solved. Several writers who offer research and insights into these challenges are:

1. Dr. Fotoh Abu Al Dahab, who writes of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and problems related to dealing with expatriate labor. His work was published by Gulf Strategic Studies Center in 2000.

2. Dr. Ali Labeed cites reasons for the spread of the Asian labor in the Arab Gulf countries. His research was published by Arab Unity Studies Center.

3. Mohammed Shahat Abdulghani, his work: *The Expatriate Labor in the GCC: Did the time come to consider it a National Security Issue?* was published by the Gulf Strategic Studies Center in 2005.

4. Ashraf Sa'ad Al Isawi, writes of the international and regional environments reflections on the GCC security. His unpublished master degree thesis was completed at the Institute of Arabic Studies and Research in Cairo, Egypt in 2005.

5. Abdulbasit Abdulmo'ty, spoke of the effects of expatriate labor on the social harmony of the Gulf countries during a seminar organized by the Arab Unity Studies Center in 2007.

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<sup>20</sup>UAE Field Study, 2005.

6. The Gulf Strategic Studies Center rendered a report on how unemployment threatens the development efforts in the Arab region. The report was published in the Economic Section of the Arab Gulf Newspaper in 2005.

7. Many other column writers for local newspapers warn the government regarding the dangers of the expatriate labor on the different social, cultural, security, and political levels. They also call for solutions to this problem before it reaches critical levels that cannot be controlled or overcome.

#### Journals and Periodicals

Journals and periodicals carry issues to a wider audience from which broader bases of study can be explored. The researcher intends to leverage the use of journals and periodicals to examine other socio-economic and cultural dimensions of foreign workers as a means by which to compare and contrast with those of expatriates in the UAE. Within the context of a broader spectrum from which to gauge, the researcher can come to a better understanding of foreign worker conditions in the UAE (defined by the elements which define them) and then better measure their degree of political influence and other positive or negative engagements.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodology in which the primary and secondary questions are researched throughout this thesis. The researcher's initial plan is to read through articles and previous research and theses related to this topic. Then with access to the latest data, facts, information and statistics required for the thesis, to find new references related to the thesis and translate the data available from Arabic to English. After compiling the research, the researcher will develop the thesis by answering the primary question and secondary questions.

#### Research Methodology

The methodology of the current research focused on the demographic security consequences and their impacts on the political, social, and cultural security on national security as a whole. There are several examples of the effects of the demographic structure on national security such as:

1. Money laundering crimes.
2. The emergence of organized crimes groups, for example, Dubai police in 2006 arrested the head of the Russian mafia who was managing money laundering operations.
3. The Indian mafia exacted revenge against its adversaries in Dubai; the Indian community constitutes 75 percent of foreigners in the country.
4. In the years 2006 and 2007, the workers' strikes and demonstrations increased rapidly:

- a. In 2006, more than 800 workers in 18 construction companies participated in a strike which lasted for 5 days.
- b. A strike occurred in Burj Khalifah on 3 February 2006 which caused severe damages to offices, computers, and cars. The total losses due to the strike totaled about 1 million US dollars.
- c. On 29 October 2007, more than 4000 construction workers went on strike and rioted on multiple occasions.
- d. In November 2007, more than 400 workers went on strike in Jabal Ali free trade zone.
- e. On 2 April 2008, groups of workers blocked the Dubai- Sharjah bypass road, attacked police cars, and threw rocks at people. On the same day a group of workers captured a police car, following the order of a company's manager.

5. Government crime statistics in 2008 revealed that financial crimes were the highest, followed by illicit drugs activities and then burglaries.<sup>21</sup>

Foreign migrant communities can be sources for future conflicts. A recent study revealed that there are more than 180 nationalities residing in the country. The study described this issue as catastrophic and a serious challenge to the UAE. There are more than 1.3 million Indians and more than 800,000 Pakistani migrant workers in the UAE. In addition, there are 350,000 Filipinos. These population figures imply that over 50 percent of the foreigners speak languages other than Arabic.

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<sup>21</sup>Dr. Mattar Ahmed Abdullah, *The Demographic Security and Demographic Structure Bulletin*, 19 November 2009.



The amounts of remittances have increased sharply from one billion United States (US) dollars in the 1990s to 4 billion US dollars in 2007. Currently, more than 12 billion US dollars are being transferred outside the country.<sup>22</sup> This has resulted in huge losses for the national economy and left many negative marks on the market and hampered prospects for future economic growth.

On the social level, most studies which analyze the demographic structure dilemma and its negative effects on the Emirati society reveal that as the heterogeneous population of Emirati citizens decreases, so do their traditions, customs, and native traits; particularly, the decreased number of native Arabic speakers.

The primary question posed in this research is: How has the growth of expatriates in the UAE impacted the security and stability of the UAE? The topic is one that deserves much attention as the UAE strives to ascertain where it stands with regard to the foreign labor force, if there is threat posed by that workforce, and if so, what should be done to level the field while moving forward.

While the massive presence of foreign workers in any society is reason for concern, the socio-political issue of expatriates in the UAE is extremely delicate because not only has it grown beyond that of the population of UAE citizens, it has also become the revolutionary force by which the nation's government rests for its prosperity.

Expatriate legal rights and privileges in the UAE have, over time, exceeded those of UAE nationals. When this occurs, it becomes apparent that the host nationals (and their voices) are marginalized. This notion, in and of itself, threatens the stability of nation by the loss of its own identity.

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<sup>22</sup>Dr. Mattar Ahmad Abdullah Study, 2009.

Herein, the researcher having briefly laid out how it got to this point in the UAE will focus on the period of 1970 to present which is most illustrative of the influx of expatriates. Thus, a sampling period will be established. Within the sample period, the researcher will examine the course of the nation as a whole (i.e. where it stood in terms of growth and capacity at both ends of the sampling period).

Other variables to be researched include the definitions of socio-economic elements which define both expatriates and UAE nationals. These include: (1) population percentages and growth trends; (2) literacy and education levels; (3) legal status and rights; (4) wage standards; (5) working and housing conditions; (6) criminal activities; and (7) other pertinent (and measurable) factors.

Finally, while examining all of the relevant data which defines each category of UAE residents, the researcher will look at trends which these measurements seem to indicate. Are they threatening in any way? Have they led to clashes, etc.

A clearer understanding of the researcher's analysis and how it will be used in this thesis is best spelled out for each of the secondary questions.

First Secondary Question: Is there a relationship between demographics and national security?

1. What is the definition of national security?
2. What are the effects of demographics on national security?

Second Secondary Question: Are there any threats of foreign labor on UAE national security?

1. What are the threats of foreign labor on the political and economic security of the UAE?

2. What are the threats of foreign labor on the UAE social security and culture?

Third Secondary Question: Does the UAE recognize the need to address the threat of foreign labor?

### Summary

Chapter 3 discussed the methodologies that will be used to answer both the primary and secondary questions in chapter 1. The methodologies address the sampling method which will be used to analyze and assess the growth of the expatriate workforce in the UAE. In the sampling analysis, the author will identify and determine the various factors in a sample subset that gives rise to the growth of the expatriate workforce as well as their impacts on the socio-political and economic development of the UAE. Then, a quantitative framework (e.g. per capita income data, distribution of wealth, literacy rates, etc.) will be used in order to evaluate the impact that expatriates have had on the political landscape of the UAE. It will present a clearer understanding of what actually happened politically, economically, and socially with respect to development or under development during between 1970 and 2010). These methods will greatly help in developing an in-depth understanding of the research topic.

The primary and secondary research questions are critical to focusing the study and relating causes and effects. Chapter 4 will fully examine a sub-set of the UAE in an effort to present a detailed understanding of the landscape based on the aforementioned background information, root causes of expatriate growth, and how they relate to the possible security threats in the UAE; thus, helping the reader to fully comprehend the significance of the study. Chapter 4 will also carefully examine the factors that contribute to potential current or future flashpoints, and then creatively analyze the means by which

the flashpoints can be mitigated and-or avoided altogether. The full analysis of chapter 4 will render a conclusion and recommendations in chapter 5. These recommendations will also include possible topics for future studies which are related to this issue as well.

The following table lays out the methodology by which the researcher will analyze and examine each secondary question in order to reveal the full extent of how the growth of the migrant work force within the UAE, threatens the nation's national security:

Table 1. Research Methodologies

Question	Strategic Context	Ends	Ways	Means
How does the growth of expatriates on UAE threaten security and stability?	The population has increased from 600,000 in 1975 to more than 4 million in 2005 and to more than 8 million currently.	The percentage of Emiratis declined from 30% to 10% during the period, which is a dangerous indicator of the demographic imbalance.	Review expatriate labor growth effects and identify the strengths and the weaknesses of the current practices.	Books, seminars, interviews, and reports published by the ministries of work and commerce.
How can the problem of demographics imbalance be treated?	The increased risk of expatriate labor on the different aspects of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Population growth rates imbalance.</li> <li>- Gender disproportion increased number of males compared to females.</li> <li>- The percentage of the local workers in the work market.</li> </ul>	Review of the causes of these problems which are caused by visa trading and residency violations.	Books, bulletins, local newspapers, and local police departments.
Is there any relationship between the demographic structure and national security?	There several effects such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased crime rates</li> <li>- Labor disturbances</li> <li>- Terrorism and extremism</li> <li>- Drugs</li> </ul>	There are several threats that face national security such as economic, social, media, and political threats.	A study of the current situation and a review of its consequences on national security and the future of UAE in general.	An analysis of articles and reviews and interviews with experts.
What is the definition of national security?	Security is the protection of the nation against any risks and to accomplish economic, social, and political development	The current situation and the use of the available manpower to achieve stability and security	The employment of the local workforce to achieve the desired consequences	Various government references
What is the impact of foreign labor on security?	Decreased loyalty to the country	Huge spending on infrastructure and national security	Review of the previous studies which dealt with the impacts of foreign labor national security and a review of the weaknesses and to find solutions	Previous studies and publications published by housing establishments

Question	Strategic Context	Ends	Ways	Means
What are the threats posed by foreign labor on political and economic security in UAE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The issue of human rights which is used by western countries as a source of pressure on UAE</li> <li>-The increase of foreign labor that belong to one nationality like the Indians and the direct action to protect these nationalities.</li> <li>-Increased remittances rates</li> <li>-Crimes and unemployment</li> </ul>	Determining the percentage of expatriate labor according to their nationality by the authorities.	Issuing new residency laws and regulations and encouraging banks to invest in expat labor remittances. In addition, the study of the effects of expatriate labor on the economic and political security.	Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and interviews with specialized experts.
What are the threats imposed by foreign labor on social and cultural security in UAE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The risk of domestic workers on the society structure.</li> <li>-The increased numbers of males compared to females. Also, the effects on traditions and social life.</li> </ul>	The current situation of the expatriate labor and to identify their impacts and how to reduce their effects in the future	Review of the previous studies which dealt with the impacts of foreign labor on the social and cultural security	Related articles and publications
Does the UAE recognize the need to address the threat of expatriate labor?	Applying laws and regulations that reduce the number of expatriate labor in the UAE	Restrict residency to a limited period of time and the cancellation of sponsorship.	Review of the previous policies and identify the weaknesses of the current policies	Related articles and publications

*Source:* Created by author using C200 from ILE course.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

This chapter analyzes UAE demography and national security: the challenges and threats for the period (1970 to 2010).

#### United Arab Emirates Demography

##### Current and Future Growth

The UAE has witnessed, since the establishment of the Union in 1971 and until now, radical changes in all aspects of life. Huge developmental achievements have occurred which surpassed all expectations in the various economic and social fields of the state. These developments resulted in the emergence of many of economic, social, and security issues which the UAE government failed to anticipate; particularly in the regulation of the labor force. The time has now arrived for the state to face these challenges; however, the search for solutions will take time and bring many risks.

A variety of censuses taken during the period from 1975 to current day shows that the UAE's population has increased from 557,887 in 1975 to 1,420,099 in 1980; an annual average growth rate of 12.5 percent. In 2000, the population climbed to 3,174,660 people.<sup>23</sup> In 2005 the population had reached 4,106,427 million.<sup>24</sup> At present, it is estimated that the population will reach over 8 million people in 2012; thus, reducing the

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<sup>23</sup>Dr. Mattar Ahmad Abdullah, *The Reality of UAE Demography and its Future*, 5.

<sup>24</sup>UAE Ministry of Economy Report on Demographics, 2010.

population of UAE citizens from somewhere between 11 percent to 15 percent.<sup>25</sup> Further, the demand for growth in an area such as the telecommunications infrastructure (such as an increase in the number of cell phone towers by 3600 by 2015) is an indicator that sends up yet another “red flag,” repeating the same trend set during the days of progressive development in the early days of the country’s history.<sup>26</sup> With the need for more development and expanded infrastructure comes the need more workers and the UAE population is not suited to answer this demand. Thus, the demand for additional foreign workers will continue at an accelerated pace.

If however, the UAE government looks for alternatives to stem the flow of foreign workers, there are several factors it needs to consider. These include:

1. The number of young UAE citizens who are (and will be) eligible for the labor market.
2. The impact of the resettling UAE citizens based on the demands of the labor markets.
3. The ability of the economy to create new jobs for its own citizens.
4. The rehabilitation of the citizens’ attitudes in taking on these jobs in order to meet the needs of the market.
5. Citizens’ tolerability of simple jobs and their ability to compete with the other groups.
6. Political and security considerations.

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<sup>25</sup>An Interview with Dr. Mattar, Abdullah on October 28, 2008 (Director of the UN Bureau for Development consultation in Abu Dhabi).

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.



In short, the UAE government must identify future developmental plans which limit the percentage of expatriate labor and find alternatives within its own borders and from its own people.

### Addressing the Demographic Imbalance

In order to solve the UAE's demographic imbalance, the UAE government must ask itself the following questions:

1. Is the UAE genuinely ready to solve this problem? If the answer is yes, then it must establish clear development plans which focus on protecting its identity, which is vital to its own national security, at the cost of minimizing overarching economic gains.

2. On a personal level, UAE citizens must be able to sacrifice their own personal interests in order to find a solution to this problem? Can UAE citizens give up (or at least lessen) its dependence on a foreign migrant work force which continues to erode the nation's language, and cultural identity?

### National Security Issues in the United Arab Emirates

Despite the necessity for a national security strategy, the term is relatively new in the references of political literature. As a result, it possesses various definitions and conflicting views regarding its constituent elements; namely, sources of threats, forms of challenges and means that embody the concepts which seek to achieve national objectives which are nested with broad and enduring interests. Since national security is a complex social, economic and political phenomenon, any attempt to define it tends to be incomplete because the definition may not be comprehensive enough. With regard to the UAE, the issue of national security must occupy a central position in the strategic,

political and military thinking of those who govern the Emirate. Some of the overriding objectives, issues and challenges include:

National security is the focus of any country's foreign policy. Because foreign policy is a practical translation for the behavior of the state on the international stage and its relations with other states and actors, these behaviors are principally focused toward pursuing the state's objectives and protecting its interests. Though the UAE has good relations with countries from which it inherits migrant workers, the relations with these same countries are often strained when these expatriates exhibit illegal or illicit tendencies while living and working in the UAE; thus, threatening UAE interests and way of life. The UAE seeks to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development. Its approach to obtaining this development involves mobilizing economic and human resources within all dimensions of society.<sup>27</sup>

### Defining National Security

National Security is defined as follows:

1. According to the British Ministry of Education, security means the protection of the nation against the danger of oppression by a foreign force.<sup>28</sup>
2. Robert Mc Namara, former American Secretary of Defense, in his book "The Essence of Security" defines security as the improvement of the economic, social, and political development under a guaranteed protection. In addition, the genuine security of any country comes from its deep knowledge of the sources that threaten its abilities and confront them in order to give an opportunity to these abilities to be genuinely improved in the present and the future.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Dr. Mattar Abdullah, *Demographic Structure and Security*, 2009.

<sup>28</sup>Emirates Center for Strategic Researches and Studies, *The Security System in the Arab Gulf* (UAE Abu Dhabi, 2008).

<sup>29</sup>Al Hanafi, Ahmad. A quotation from the article "How Israel thinks about its National Security." From the book "The great Hoax" Tahali, Ahmad, Al Fadheelah publications, Dubai, 1991, 227.

3. In the Holy Quran “Let them adore the Lord of this House, who provides them with food against hunger, and with security against fear (of danger).”<sup>30</sup>

4. The national security is the organizational or practical frame adopted by the country to achieve its security.<sup>31</sup> The security of any country comes from its citizens' security because security is a social, family, and individual necessity. It is also the opposite of fear and it does not solve conflicts through war. Allah in the Holy Quran says “O you, who have believed, enter into Islam completely [and perfectly].”<sup>32</sup>

5. The Directorate of Social Sciences defines national security as the ability of any country to protect its internal values against the internal and external threats or the military ability of the country needed to overpower the internal and external hostilities.<sup>33</sup>

#### National Security Dimensions and Levels in the United Arab Emirates

The comprehensive national security concept is multidimensional. It requires the cooperation and commitment of both a myriad of government agencies and the people of the state all working toward a common goal. In the UAE, the multiple dimensions are political, economic, social, and environmental.

The Political Dimension: This is represented by preserving the political entity of the state. Sheikh Zayed, may Allah rest his soul in peace, has established the state of law and constitution and emphasized the principles of justice and equality. In addition, he

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<sup>30</sup>The Holy Quran, 3-4.

<sup>31</sup>Al Hanafi, Ahmad, “How Israel thinks about its national security,” 227.

<sup>32</sup>The Holy Quran, 208.

<sup>33</sup>Mamdooh A. Fathi, *UAE where to!* (UAE, 2005), 11.

established strong regional and international relations based on cooperation and mutual interests. The state is still following his steps by the wise leadership of Sheikh Khaleefah in order to accomplish the vital interests of the state.<sup>34</sup>

The Economic Dimension: The UAE government aims at providing a suitable climate and security to meet the people's needs in order for them to live a comfortable life. For the most part, has been achieved; however, it must be preserved.<sup>35</sup>

The Social Dimension: The UAE government aims at providing security for its citizens in order to enhance their loyalty and social ties. Also, elevating the levels of education and health & human services help preserve overall well-being.<sup>36</sup>

The Environmental Dimension: The UAE government aims at providing protection against environmental risks (such as waste) and to marginalize the causes of pollution while preserving the naval environment.<sup>37</sup>

#### Challenges facing the National Security of the United Arab Emirates

While national security primarily means the ability of the state's people and the government to protect and develop their capacities and capabilities at all levels through all means and policies, there exist threats and challenges toward achieving these ends.

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ashraf Kishik, "Foreign Labor in the GCC," *Gulf Affairs Magazine* (2nd issue 1999).

<sup>36</sup>Abdullrahman Ali Abdullrahman Baashin, *Social and Political Effects of Foreign Labor on the Gulf* (Cairo, 1997).

<sup>37</sup>Emirates Center for Strategic Researches and Studies, *The Current Transformations and their Role in Making Change in the Arab World* (Abu Dhabi, 2007).

Categorically, these challenges exist both outside the state (transnational) and within (national) and are both traditional and non-traditional (irregular). The greatest threats posed to the UAE are categorized by military, indirect, cultural, economic, and political.

Military Threats: The latest developments regionally and internationally have imposed several challenges on the UAE.<sup>38</sup>

1. Iranian occupation of the three islands, Abu Musa, the Great Tunb, and the Small Tunb.
2. The undeclared Iranian military threat and their government's endeavor to possess a great weapons arsenal that includes long distances missiles and spy satellites, and their continuous efforts to possess nuclear weapons.
3. The inexistence of an advanced military technology which causes an obvious military imbalance in the region.
4. The demographic imbalance internally in comparison to neighboring countries; thus, impacting the size of the military.
5. The unstable situation in Iraq, and its potential for bleeding into the region at large.
6. The foreign interference in the areas under the claims of protecting the commercial passage in the Red Sea and the Gulf; thus, ensuring the unimpeded flow of oil.

Indirect Threats:<sup>39</sup> The increase of organized crime rates (such as drugs and money laundering); of which drug-smuggling is the greatest threat.

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<sup>38</sup>Arab National Security Challenges, *Home Shield Magazine*, 58.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

Labor Disturbances: An internal threat, brought about in large part because of the huge divide between the expatriate work force and local nationals.

Terrorism, Extremism, and Violence: It is known that there are inactive terrorist groups waiting to be directed by external sides at the appropriate place and time. The existence of these groups has strategic significance of the region as they lure other unwanted foreign parties into the region. The results of terrorism, extremism, and violence are:

1. Destruction of the stability and security of the state and disturbing its national unity.
2. Affect on income resources and the amounts of international investments.
3. Impediment to development projects which increase unemployment rates and decrease the national income.<sup>40</sup>

Cultural and Media Threats: These threats are caused by the ideological penetration of outside culture and lifestyles as they try to create ideological and cultural dependency to the foreign life; affecting the state's language, culture, and traditions.<sup>41</sup>

Economic Threats: The recent developments in the international economy pose several challenges for the UAE. For example, some economic reports indicate that investment in the Arab world is at a low point and rests at only 1.8 percent. The total international investments in the Asian markets is 142 billion US dollars; however in the

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<sup>40</sup>Mahmood Khalil, "The Challenges of the Arab National Security," *Home Shield Magazine* (February 2001), 59.

<sup>41</sup>Emirates Center for Strategic Researches and Studies, "The Security Systems in the GCC—Internal and External Challenges," 2008.

Arab countries it is only 3.8 billion US dollars and the Gulf countries it is even less at 412 million US dollars.<sup>42</sup>

Political Threats: The issue of human rights has become a source of pressure in the UAE. In particular, demands from governments of countries which have a large expatriate population in the UAE have demanded rights far beyond those of local citizens. From these demands evolve mounting pressures between the government and its own citizens.

### The Objectives of the United Arab Emirates National Security

The UAE aims at achieving national security through a comprehensive strategy that was originally laid out by the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan in his speech at the opening of the National Council on 13 February 1972: to accomplish the citizens' hopes in having a dignified and comfortable life and to have a strong and advanced country (Appendix "B" Shows Sheikh Zayed's vision). The security priorities, goals and objectives for the UAE in the 21st century are building a strong and solid society which can last, and which does not allow the economic prosperity to threaten the political and security establishment. The concept of UAE national security does not only include protection against armed conflict, but it also includes protection against crimes, diseases, mutiny, disasters, ideological and armed terrorism, poverty, and illegal immigration.<sup>43</sup>

The objectives of the UAE national security can be summarized as follows:  
The political objectives of national security are to maintain the political stability and the

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<sup>42</sup>*Al Khaleej Newspaper*, November 5, 2008.

<sup>43</sup>Fathi, 42.

unity of the UAE, to activate the role of the National Council, to protect UAE residents' rights and freedom, and to achieve social justice. The defensive and security objectives are to build a strong and well trained army equipped with the latest weapons and technologies in order to compensate for the shortage of human resources. In addition, the Emirate strives to build well-trained special operations forces to protect the critical infrastructure of the UAE. Moreover, in coordination with other GCC countries, to form alliances which are concerned in the gulf security in order to protect their interests.<sup>44</sup>

#### The Risk of Foreign Labor on the Security, Political, and Economic Dimensions

The rapid influx of foreign workers since the first oil boom raised a range of concerns for the people of the UAE in the areas of security and politics. The combination of expatriate workers has reflected a growth in heterogeneity and imposed a series of challenges at the internal level which exceeded the mere fear of the risk of unemployment as these workers formed a fertile environment for work unrest.

The growth and unrest of foreign labor greatly impacts the aspects of UAE customs, traditions, religion, language and political orientations and can result in a breach of the political structure if suitable conditions exist. If a group of foreign workers, who form the country's majority, ask for self-determination, this can produce generations of immigrants who may in turn, and over time, form their own social status which may thus erupt into political movements that reflect their ideologies, ambitions and demands. Here, an example can be seen in the approval of the Indian Parliament on 25 August 2008 to

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 39.



consider the Indians who work abroad as immigrant labor.<sup>45</sup> This decision holds dangerous political and security consequences if these workers are included in the International Convention for the protection of the rights of workers and immigrants. Such a treaty was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 18 December 1990, and executed in 2003. This treaty highlights the basic principles for the treatment of migrant workers and their families and provides international standards for the protection of their rights in their countries of origin and the countries in which they work (see Appendix C which spells out the mandates of the International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers). This mandate also affords India the opportunity to ask for implementation on behalf of its communities abroad; all of which will be a source of pressure on the UAE to render a political decision. India has demanded more than once that the UAE government review these agreements of employment because of the alleged lack of safety measures in the premises of the Indian workers in the UAE. Failure by the UAE to do so would bring about yet another added dimension (albeit political) of the pressures that the country may face by international organizations concerned with human rights, for example, the American organization “Human Rights Watch”. In a letter sent to the UAE government in April 2003, the Human Rights Watch urged the UAE to ratify international treaties for the protection of labor rights of foreign workers and their family members.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Al Jazeera News Channel, Qatar, 15 January 2009.

<sup>46</sup>Mohamad Shahat Abdulghani, “The Expatriate Labor in the Gulf,” *Gulf Affairs Magazine* edition 41 (April 2005).

The US State Department's report in 2005 on the trafficking of human beings in the UAE, cited that migrant workers in the UAE are exposed to physical and sexual abuse, delay in the payment of salaries, and the confiscation of passports and travel documents. The US State Department's report also found that the sponsor system is a violation of the rights of migrant workers, which opens the door to tighten the pressure on the UAE to sign the International Convention for the protection of the rights of migrant workers; which, if acted upon by the UAE government, would lead to security problems and economic and social risks as well as negative repercussions on the political security, and would entail the following:

1. Escape of workers from their places of work to other locations, which may result in the commitment of various crimes.<sup>47</sup>

2. The presence of expatriate labor in sensitive sites, such as the armed forces and oil installations, power stations and airports, which may lead to these people, who, acting under the guidance of third parties, manipulating the destiny of the state. This would be a burden on the security services, the police, and the armed forces to address the dangerous events that may occur. In addition, it would place a burden on the UAE economy, policies, and security situation of the state if the events coincided with the explosion of external aggression or internal events planned in advance. Herein the UAE, by virtue of expatriate demands in the face of international support agreements and political

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

endorsements, faces possible instability that may aim at destabilizing the security and political system of the State and which must be taken into account.<sup>48</sup>

### Security Implications and the Political Risk of Foreign Labor

It is indeed likely that the presence of large number of foreign workers will have implications on the political landscape of the UAE. What is most at stake are the country's national culture, identity, and stability within.

In some cases, the external support to the UAE's foreign labor has served as a source for acts of sabotage and has provoked unrest and disturbances. During the period from 2003 to 2007 foreign labor unrests in the UAE were on the rise. The most serious disturbances took place on 29 October 2007, and again on 3 February 2008, where foreign workers<sup>49</sup> in Sajaa in Sharjah went on strike in order to demand higher wages than what was agreed on in their contracts. Another strike took place in Ajman on 3 March 2008 for the same reasons Pakistani, Indian, Bengali, and Chinese labor formed over half of the striking workers. The Directorate of Dubai Police has reported that the recurrence of labor strikes continues to grow and their effects on day-to-day life in the UAE have brought about heightened tensions.<sup>50</sup>

The presence of large numbers of foreign workers of one nationality in the same organization has led to the formation of pressure groups who have influenced the government toward issues of civil rights. When contentious issues (such as civil rights)

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<sup>48</sup>“The Political Effects of Foreign Immigration” (A Seminar discussing Foreign Labour in the GCC, Arab Union Studies Centre August 2004), 485.

<sup>49</sup>*Itihad Newspaper*, 30 March 2008.

<sup>50</sup>*Itihad Newspaper*, 1 April 2008.

are exploited by biased media and satellite channels seeking to defame the reputation of the state, additional external pressures mount and cause the government to act one way or another.

The increased unrest of foreign labor is also a welcomed “side-show” for inactive terrorist cells which are given the window of opportunity to transfer their activities to areas of calm and stability. What is occurring in the UAE is quite similar to what has happened in Saudi Arabia over the past decade; where more than 550 terrorist organizations have launched their secret apparatus under the cover of foreign labor unrest; their ramifications being witnessed on the international scene<sup>51</sup>.

#### Risk of Foreign Labor on the Economic Security

One of the most dangerous impacts brought on by the large foreign labor market has been the high rate of the annual money transfers. According to a study issued by the Gulf Cooperation Council in March 2004, the total remittances of foreign workers for the period from 1975 to 2002 amounted to \$65 billion. These remittances are gaining increased relevance because of the transfer of the local incomes to the foreign economies. The flow of foreign currency into the UAE markets has a direct negative impact on the Emirates’ economic situation and the development process. Appendix D depicts the proportion of individual transfers of foreign workers in the state.<sup>52</sup> Where Appendix D reveals the upward trend of monetary conversions and the seriousness of remittances with

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<sup>51</sup>Fathi. 357.

<sup>52</sup>Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce, Information and Decision-Making Support Center, 2008.

regard to the amount of depletion of the resources of the state, the following table shows the amount of remittances (after conversion to UAE currency) in “billion dirham.”<sup>53</sup>

Table 2. The amount of remittances (after conversion to UAE currency) in “billion dirham”

Remittance Rates	2006	2007	2008	2009	Percentage (%)
Transfers of Individuals	34.2	37.3	41.9	44.2	23
Transfers of Corporate Profits	86.6	98.2	112	125.1	30

*Source:* Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce.

A closer look at the transfer rates indicates that Asian labor represents the bulk of foreign remittances in the UAE (at 67 percent); this is consistent with the fact that they constitute 77 percent of the total expatriate workforce, which has reached 3 million workers. Additionally, and of great concern, is that approximately 90 percent of the expatriate labor are living in the UAE without their families and thus have limited expenditures for basic need items. This would imply that their transfer rates may reach as much as 80 to 85 percent of their personal income.

The enduring and long-term negative effects on the UAE economy include:

1. A continual drain of the UAE’s national income.
2. Aggravation of the current account deficits.

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

3. Lost opportunities for investments that can be poured into other worthwhile projects such as infrastructure, transportation, schools, and advanced industries.

4. The lost opportunities and initiatives to attract remittances and invest them locally.<sup>54</sup>

Unemployment is another consequence which affects the UAE economy. The heavy reliance on foreign labor has created a great imbalance in the work market and has caused an increase in the unemployment rates for UAE citizens; reaching as high as 20 percent.<sup>55</sup> It appears that unemployment will continue to rise, especially in light of the fact that high numbers of new entrants will attempt to enter the work market. These new entrants will be graduates of universities and training institutes; some of whom will even be females. Khalid Al-Khazraji, the former Undersecretary of the Ministry of Work indicated that the phenomenon of unemployment and the lack of job opportunities for UAE citizens are driven by the following reasons:

1. UAE citizens not being afforded preferential hiring opportunities.
2. Intense competition for vacant jobs between UAE citizens and foreign workers (who would easily work for lower wages and in positions of lesser responsibility).
3. The absence of clear employment policies and strategies set by the UAE government.

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<sup>54</sup>Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Researches, "Human Power and Development in the GCC," Abu Dhabi, 2006, 101, 105.

<sup>55</sup>Ashraf Al Isawai, "The Political and Security Dimensions for Expatriate Labor," *Gulf Affairs Magazine*, 34.

The negative effects of foreign labor on the UAE economy has fostered frustration and negative attitudes among the citizens of the UAE; many of whom claim that the state has neglected their rights as citizens.<sup>56</sup>

### Causes of Unemployment and its Negative Effects

There are many causes for unemployment in the UAE. First, the lack of expertise and competencies among the national workforce, particularly in the private sector which witnesses a tough competition because of the well trained and qualified expatriate workforce and who accept low wages which UAE citizens do not accept because of the expensive living costs. Second, the large numbers of graduates who are specialized in subjects which do not meet the needs of the job market are looking for jobs in the public sector only because of its high wages. Third, most jobs are located in the main cities such as Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah, but jobs opportunities are so rare in other parts of the Emirates that it leads to higher unemployment rates, especially between women as it reaches more than 20 percent.

The rise in UAE unemployment has many dangerous effects on the society and on the national economy because unemployed individuals are a burden on their families and on the community despite the fact that they can be an essential source for enriching the national economy. In addition, unemployed youth can cause serious problems to the society because they are more prone to commit many social crimes (such as robbery, drugs, murder, and armed burglary, etc.). Moreover, unemployment may affect society's values, traditions, and national identity. As a result there will be less loyalty among

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<sup>56</sup>*Economy Today Magazine*, edition 35 (June 2007), 11.

unemployed individuals to their society and country and the possibility of the spread of ideological and religious extremism might fester among the disenfranchised.<sup>57</sup>

### Impact of Foreign Workers on Social Security

The rise of the foreign work force in the UAE has also severely impacted the social state. A high percentage of male foreign workers in the younger age groups have created an imbalance in age and gender. Also, the growing demographic imbalance has affected the social structure and family life, as they became entirely dependent on this workforce. In addition, high crime rates have emerged as the entry of large numbers of people who have dangerous criminal history in their home countries, such as forgery, theft, drug abuse, robbery of public money and other crimes that were not previously widespread in UAE society.<sup>58</sup>

One of the significant risks that threaten the UAE society in general, and casts a shadow on the family life, is drugs. Once having an annual average of merely 111 drug-related crimes each year, drugs has slowly integrated its way into the UAE fabric; being brought on large part by the mostly Central Asian expatriates. The most important factors that have contributed to the spread of this crime in the country and the high number of crimes are:

1. The state is targeted by drug dealers because of the availability of financial liquidity necessary to buy them.

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<sup>57</sup>Fadhel Lotah, *Economy Today Magazine*, 12.

<sup>58</sup>Sanad Ibrahim Al Fadhaah, "Expatriate Labor in the GCC–The Political and Social Effects" (M.A. Degree Thesis, Cairo), 101.



2. The geographical location of the state, as it is near the countries which produce drugs (Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan).

3. The weak family supervision over the children, traveling abroad, free time, and the availability of money. It is important to highlight that 90 percent of the citizens who are on drugs are charged with possession and use of drugs, and more than half of them are married. Also, the percentage of unemployed who are on drugs is 72 percent; most of these are between the ages of 30 and 40 years old. In addition, 51.5 percent of those who bring drugs to the UAE are from Pakistan, and the number of cases treated in rehabilitation centers is 2,465 cases during the years 2006 and 2007.<sup>59</sup>

Table 3 depicts the most dangerous crimes in the UAE as reported by the federal, state and local police across the UAE in 2006.

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<sup>59</sup>Sharjah Police, General Headquarters, *The Annual Crimes Report* (Sharjah 2007), 162.

Table 3. The Most Dangerous Crimes Recorded by Police in all Emirates in 2006

THE MOST DANGEROUS CRIMES		ABU DHABI	DUBAI	SHARJAH	AJMAN	UM AL QUAIN	RAS AL KHAIMAH	FUJAIRAH	TOTAL
Counterfeiting or Forgery of Currency or Bonds		29	12	7	2	1	15	1	67
Manufacture or Possession of the Means of Counterfeiting		0	11	0	1	0	0	0	12
Fraud or Fraudulent use of Formal Documents		150	206	362	34	6	49	10	817
Impersonating Security Officers		12	45	17	14	1	3	9	101
Murder		5	20	11	1	0	1	1	39
Attempted Murder		8	8	6	1	0	5	1	29
Suicide or the attempt to commit Suicide		93	143	86	37	3	88	4	454
Eloquent Attack		0	380	95	50	0	231	2	758
Rape		9	15	23	9	0	10	3	69
Coerced Sodomy		8	16	17	2	4	9	4	60
Kidnapping		16	37	15	3	1	6	4	82
Bribes/ Corruption		19	30	10	3	2	6	2	72
Thefts	Coerced Theft	60	190	193	11	4	10	1	469
	Armed Robbery	0	6	2	0	0	0	0	8
	Pick Pocketing	210	334	128	67	0	19	0	758
	Houses theft	736	420	444	164	38	209	14	2025
	Cars Theft	101	186	266	24	3	20	6	606
	Embezzlement	1	4	0	4	0	4	0	13
Drugs	Drug Trafficking	21	31	6	2	0	2	2	64
	Smuggling / Export	37	280	12	0	0	4	3	336
	Promoting	3	33	7	1	3	3	0	50
	Import	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Possession	10	93	38	8	0	15	3	167
	Abuse	85	164	37	20	9	8	4	327
Prostitution	Management of Prostitution	0	1	1	0	1	3	1	7
	Practicing Prostitution	1	4	20	11	6	0	0	42

Source: *Al Khaleej Newspaper*, 27 January 2009; Sharjah Police Annual Report, 2007, 173.

### Crimes in United Arab Emirates

The study of crimes in the UAE is incredibly important as it is considered one of the most dangerous threats brought on by foreign labor. Most notably, crime has increased among Asian communities who suffer from poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. According to the UAE MOI, the number of crimes in 1996 was 37,359; the highest percentages were recorded in Dubai (37 percent), then Sharjah (31 percent), followed by Abu Dhabi (18 percent).<sup>60</sup>

### Criminal Summary and Trends

#### Most Significant Crimes

#### Drugs

Drug use (possession and distribution) is one of the most dangerous crimes in the UAE. A variety of newspapers have published reports of new drug crimes on a daily basis. For example, a woman was arrested trying to smuggle 10.4 kilograms of heroin. Another gang smuggled 70 kilograms of crystal-meth through Dubai airport. On the 3 December 2012, 8 kilograms of crystal-meth, which were worth over 3.5 million Emirati dirham, were found on an African woman. Dubai led all UAE cities in drug crimes at 52.5 percent of the total recorded crimes in 2005. Further, the percentage of UAE citizens who were involved in these crimes was only 2.2 percent, whereas Asians (25.2 percent) and other Arabs (19 percent) comprised the highest categories of those

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<sup>60</sup>Dr. Mattar Ahmad Abdullah, *Imbalance in Demography* (Abu Dhabi 2005), 5.

involved in drug-related crimes further illustrating the dangers that foreigners have brought upon the UAE.<sup>61</sup>

### Violations of Immigration Laws

Illegal immigration is increasing sharply in the UAE in large part because of the ease in which foreigners can receive tourist visas. Many foreigners who come to the UAE posing as tourists remain in the UAE to look for employment due to the harsh conditions in their native lands. The UAE MOI, in 2011 reported that 86 percent of these violators were from Asian countries. It also reported that 8,800 illegal immigrants were arrested in 2011 in Dubai during a six month period.<sup>62</sup>

### Public Crimes

The number of public crimes has increased rapidly in the UAE; in particular, armed burglary of banks. The number of such crimes in 2006 was 1,582. The UAE MOI reported that Asians committed 36 percent of these crimes.<sup>63</sup>

### Suicides

Suicides have become common predominantly in the UAE Indian communities. UAE police sources have reported that the number of monthly suicide attempts were more than 50 attempts; 76.5 percent of them were among the Indian communities.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>*Al Khaleej Newspaper*, April 5, 2012.

<sup>62</sup>*Al Khaleej Newspaper*, January 14, 2012.

<sup>63</sup>*Al Khaleej Newspaper*, April 5, 2012.

<sup>64</sup>Dr. Fardoon Mohamad Najeeb, "Housemaids' Crimes in the UAE," Dubai Police, 2008.

## Domestic Crimes

Domestic crimes have threatened the UAE's social bonds. The Dubai Police have reported that in 2008, foreign housemaids in the UAE have committed an assortment of domestic crimes, which has included murder, adultery, poisoning of children, and the administering of undocumented medicines to minors in the absence of their parents.<sup>65</sup>

### Piracy

According to a recent study conducted by the UAE Ministry of Economics, the UAE is experiencing a sharp increase in the losses of forged goods and commercial piracy. In fact, the K.B.M.G Company in concluded that in 2005 alone, the total losses of forged and pirated goods amounted to over a half billion US dollars. These goods include commodities such as tobacco, spare parts, cosmetics, and food.<sup>66</sup>

## Organized Crime

Organized crime gangs in the world (commonly referred to as “mafia”) take advantage of economic and social opportunities where ease of access is most prevalent. In 2006, the Dubai Police arrested the head of the Russian mafia, who had found ample opportunities to exploit the UAE economy on the “black market”. In addition, Indian gangs, (called the “Nexolite”), have penetrated the Indian workers’ communities in order to urge them to protest and to commit violent acts against the UAE police and other vulnerable UAE citizens.

The following table depicts the increasing trend in crimes from 2000 to 2007.

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<sup>65</sup>*Al Khaleej Newspaper*, April 5, 2012.

<sup>66</sup>UAE Ministry of Economy Report, 2005.

Table 4. The increasing trend in crimes from 2000 to 2007

Type of Crime	Total 2000	Total 2005	Total 2007
Crimes against the Security and Interests of the State	656	1147	1901
Crimes against Public Posts	303	418	615
Crimes against the Administration of Justice	164	227	252
Crimes causing Public Danger	540	571	683
Crimes against Religious Faith and Rites	25	19	40
Crimes against Family	7	10	12
Crimes against Persons	5950	8984	10627
Crimes against Property	37632	39185	65512
Crimes against Dangerous Drug Laws	743	914	1335
Crimes against Alcoholic Drinks Law	4220	4939	6086
Crimes against Immigration and Passports Law	12370	7207	1383
Crimes against Organization of Labor Relations	820	356	529
Crimes against Municipal Laws and Regulations	167	59	105
Crime against Fire Arms Laws	34	55	132
Crimes against Communication System Laws	41	23	199
Crimes against Juvenile Delinquents and Homeless Laws	0	0	7
Crimes against Hunting Laws and other Laws	57	177	538
Total	63729	64291	89956

Source: Dr. Mattar Ahmad Abdullah, *Security and Demography* (Abu Dhabi 2009), 19.

The following table depicts the trend in crimes committed by particular nationalities during the period from 2005 to 2007.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>United Arabs Emirates, National Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.uaestatistics.gov.ae> (accessed May 12, 2012).

Table 5. The trend in crimes committed by particular nationalities during the period from 2005 to 2007

Nationality	Total 2005	Total 2007	Nationality	Total 2005	Total 2007
UAE	12958	14770	Iran	2224	2974
Saudi Arabia	535	668	Pakistan	7761	11253
Bahrain	197	196	India	14119	19461
Qatar	33	58	Bangladesh	3764	4166
Oman	858	1219	Afghanistan	516	885
Kuwait	87	77	Sri Lanka	1322	1870
Yemen	738	1084	Philippines	1929	4656
Jordan	2287	3201	Other Asian Countries	2438	2379
Syria	2919	4357	Non - Arab African Countries	1095	2418
Iraq	826	1232	Britain	484	118
Lebanon	1071	1633	Other European Countries	1069	1766
Palestine	967	1599	Commonwealth Countries	1620	521
Egypt	3228	5441	U.S.A.	149	346
Sudan	1124	1704	Other American Countries	172	231
Somalia	475	586	Australia	88	109
Other Arab Countries	785	1401	Not Stated	2889	4252
<b>Total</b>				<b>70727</b>	<b>96631</b>

Source: United Arabs Emirates, National Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.uaestatistics.gov.ae> (accessed May 12, 2012).

### Impact of Foreign Household Workers

Foreign household workers have become an integral part of the UAE community. The UAE is one of the most popular employers of foreign household workers. Foreign household laborers fill positions that include housemaids, cooks, drivers, and guards, etc.; the vast majority of these household employees are non-Muslims; which has begun to have dangerous effects on raising native UAE children in ways which are customary to UAE culture and traditions. The following table (table 6) reveals the number of foreign household workers in relation to the UAE population.

Table 6. Foreign Household Workers in Relation to UAE Population

Year	Population/ Million	Domestic Workers	Salaries/ Million Dirham	Population/ Million	Domestic Workers/ Thousand	Salaries/Million Dirham
2005	4.626.000	250.000	262.500	1.778	110.000	1231
2006	4.900.000	257.600	285.200	1.900	114.300	1300
2007	5.223.000	267.800	301.000.000	2.035	119.500	1373

Domestic Workers in the UAE

Domestic Workers in the Emirate of  
Abu Dhabi

*Source:* Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce Information Centre, "The situation of domestic workers in the UAE," 2007.

According to the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce, the proportion of foreign household workers constitute 5 percent of the country's population and has risen to 15 percent in Abu Dhabi alone. As the foreign household workers continue to populate



the UAE landscape, their impacts on diminishing the relevance of UAE customs becomes ever more a threat to future UAE generations. Asian domestic workers constitute 98 percent of household laborers, of whom, 48 percent are non-Muslims who do not speak Arabic. An unpublished study by the UAE Ministry of Social Affairs indicates that about 30 percent of the UAE children being raised by foreign household nannies imitate their nanny's accent, and communicate with her via some sort of hybrid language. Further, the study claims that domestic household workers have committed many serious crimes such as torture of children, beatings, burning kids with cigarettes as punishments, mixing food with toxic materials, and hot water scalding, etc. In addition, recent statistics show that 94 percent of citizens depend on housemaids in educating their children.<sup>68</sup> The long-term effects of these practices are devastating to any society and fall away from traditional societal cultures and norms.<sup>69</sup>

#### Impact of Foreign Labor on the Arabic Language and Culture

The growth of foreign labor has diminished the necessity for spoken Arabic throughout the Emirate. Since a state's language is at the centerpiece of any nation's culture it contrives a society's ability to be able to effectively communicate; especially within its own borders. The Arabic language is different from other languages because it is an element of the Muslim culture in general. Thus, the state can find strength through its spoken and written Arabic. However, as the foreign work force has drastically grown, the use and understanding of Arabic across the Emirate has diminished. What has

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<sup>68</sup>*Al Bayan Newspaper*, March 27, 2012.

<sup>69</sup>Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce Information Centre, "The Situation of Domestic Workers in the UAE," 2007, 1.

evolved has been a strange vocabulary and terminologies inclusive to Arab slang (both among younger Emiratis and foreign workers as well). Further, the composition of Arabic sentence structures is improper and is witnessed in the many ads scattered throughout the country and read or heard by children every day.

Communicating with workers, nannies and other segments has been incredibly challenging and has created language duplications which affect the native tongue and national identity. Since Arabic is tied to Islam as well, the impacts also affect religion. A recent study found that 14.3 percent of UAE children imitate their non-Muslim maids during some religious rituals; diminishing their understanding and proper practice of their faith—a bad habit that could only get worse. In short, as the use of Arabic in UAE society diminishes and dialects arise, Arab identity slowly dissolves as does the presence of a deep-seeded Arab culture.

#### Emirati Marriage to Foreigners

One of the most significant social risks in any Arab country is marrying foreign women. First, it fosters a weak sense of national belonging. Since the mother is the source from which children learn manners, morals, language, etc., mothers represent a “small country.” Foreign mothers, on the other hand, cause their children to have divided loyalties between their homeland and the mother’s homeland. Such a practice over time weakens a state’s spirit of nationalism.

Mothers are also a child’s first teacher and oversee the completion of various lessons and homework assignments. When the mother is not an Arab, the level of education for a UAE child of a mixed-marriage tends to be low, often resulting in child’s dropping out of school or taking to a life of crime. Of great significance is the rise of

divorce rates in mixed-marriages. Studies have shown that almost 60 percent of marriages to foreigners end in divorce; thus, resulting in further discredit on the institution of marriage itself, as well as the family unit.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Morale Guidance Directorate, *The Marriage of Foreigners Phenomenon*, 21.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusion

Dr. Hessah Lotah painted a dark scenario of the expatriate threat to the UAE's national security when she said: "Emiratis will comprise 4% of the population in the coming 10-15 years and the human Asian flood, in addition to other nationalities, will have negative effects on the country's security, stability, foundations, and decisions."<sup>71</sup>

Since foreign labor comprises 90 percent of the UAE job market and 80 percent of the population, the issue is one that has been duly recognized by UAE government officials. Dubai Police Commander, Dahi Khafan, spoke of the risk of this problem when he said: "I am afraid that we are building capacity, but losing the UAE."<sup>72</sup> By conducting several thorough analyses of the characteristics of the current manpower and realizing its social, cultural, political, and economical costs, UAE government officials fully realize that a solution will eventually be required in order to regain the demographic balance and stabilize the society in order to preserve the long-term homogeneity of the state.

The UAE government has recognized the daunting issues it faces and has begun to take small steps. Throughout the country, different industrial sectors have begun working on localizing jobs by putting more concentration on the quality of foreign manpower, and making use of modern organizational and administrative techniques.

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<sup>71</sup>*Alittihad Newspaper*, [www.alittihad.ae](http://www.alittihad.ae).

<sup>72</sup>*Alittihad Newspaper*, [www.alittihad.ae](http://www.alittihad.ae).

The UAE government has also encouraged job localization programs, especially in the public sectors as an incentive for members of the UAE Armed Forces. In addition, the government is gradually trying to cut down on the number of foreign workers coming to the country through hiring national workers while at the same time considering important factors which are:

1. The qualifications of the local manpower in order to meet the requirements for development while concentrating on the educational outcomes in order to ensure that they meet the needs of the job market.

2. Taking advantage of the technical and scientific experiences of the foreign labor exploring mechanism to rid the country of unskilled foreign laborers who can eventually be replaced by local workers. Such an initiative has already been instituted with India where both countries have agreed on an automatic system for approving employment contracts in order to control the influx of the Indian labor whose numbers exceed 2 million.<sup>73</sup>

During the first part of 2012, the Emirati authorities have focused on three sectors (industry, commerce, and construction) in order to increase the participation of citizens in the work market and to improve their skills. The work strategy aims at localizing jobs in the country in 15 years (i.e. from 2010 to 2025).<sup>74</sup> The long term objective of this strategy is to reach a level in which the local workforce is fully utilized. This can be done through determining the strategic significance of the jobs and the activities which must be

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<sup>73</sup>*Al Bayan Newspaper*, April 5, 2012.

<sup>74</sup>Emirates Center for Strategic Researches and Studies (A Seminar, 1 January 2009).

performed by UAE citizens only (such as jobs in education, high ranking jobs in public and private institutions, national banks, and exchange companies, etc.). While the best use of the local workforce increases the number of UAE citizens in the work market, it also instills and develops in the long-term, the notions of loyalty, patriotism, and work values in the Emirati society through the active participation of media and educational institutes in the country.

Still, treating the demographic imbalance requires every UAE citizen to forfeit his/her personal materialistic gains and focusing on retaining development gains according to well laid out plans. Perhaps this can be achieved through activating the localization process, the encouragement of citizens to increase their own fertility rate, through the encouragement of women to participate in the work market, and through the development of the educational outcomes in order to meet the work market demands.

While the UAE, like any other country in the world, faces several outside challenges and threats that affect its vital and strategic interests, it will always need some degree of foreign labor in order to continue its future developmental process. Expatriate labor has always played a significant role in achieving economic development through compensating for the lack of national labor across the full industrial and economic horizon. However, to what extent is the right mix of maintaining development, while sacrificing homogeneity, nationalism, culture, religion, and foremost, the security of the state?

### Recommendations for Action

It is evident from what has been discussed in the current research that there has been a great dependence on expatriate labor in the UAE since the 1970s. As a result of

this dependence, a series of flaws, dangerous effects and challenges are now being encountered in the UAE (and across the entire spectrum of GCC countries) at the political, economic, security, cultural, and social levels. In response to these flaws and imbalances, the following recommendations are suggested in order to limit the risks posed by foreign labor and to control the demographic imbalance.

First, the establishment of a higher council in the UAE for designing population strategies which specify the country's annual needs for expatriate labor and to put forward mechanisms for decreasing the numbers of expatriate labor in the country.

Second, on the economic level, it is vital that the UAE government study the job market and its requirements in order to provide well-trained and qualified labor for jobs which its own citizens cannot perform. This can be accomplished through establishing a statistical database which illustrates the number of local and expatriate labor in the country in order to know the actual requirements of the work market and to design manpower policies which help in achieving successful long-term economic plans.

Third, the improvement of educational syllabi at all levels; though more concentration must be given to technical education through developing vocational training programs in order to enhance the local workforce's skills and abilities.

Fourth, at the political level, it is important that the UAE (as well as other GCC countries) coordinate its political positions regarding the international treaties which call for localizing expatriate labor by giving them nationalities and to treat both expatriates and locals equally. In addition, the establishment of a committee specialized in responding to international organizations' reports which criticize the UAE and claim that

there are violations for expatriate labor rights. It must clarify the negative effects posed by expatriate labor on the country's economy, security, stability, culture, and policy.

Fifth, at the security level, it is important to address all aspects of national security; taking into consideration how expatriate labor affects the stability of the society. This would require maintaining close observation of suspicious expatriate labor groups which may threaten the country's internal security and stability through the commitment of various crimes and other illicit activities. Such crimes and illegal activities would oblige UAE security departments to perform intensive inspection patrols and to arrest illegal laborers in order to observe the country's borders firmly and to prevent illegal labor (and other illegal immigrants) from entering the country. Dealing with expatriate labor at the security levels would also require the establishment of a national database which provides information about their numbers, composition, and their involvement in the country's effective sectors by which security departments can provide the necessary suggestions and recommendations needed for dealing with them seriously and strictly.

Sixth, at the information level, the media plays a vital role in familiarizing UAE citizens with the importance of work values and the necessity to reduce the number of expatriate labor in the country in order to maintain the country's stability. This can be achieved through the different types of media such as news papers, television, radio, conferences, and seminars in order to show the risks of having huge numbers of expatriate labor.

Seventh, close coordination must be established between the Ministry of Work, MOI, as well as the different security departments in order to control the work market and to deport illegal labors who, generally, have no jobs and who form an active



environment for different crimes. In addition, the UAE (and the larger GCC community as a whole) must find a common formula which facilitates laborers' travel, work, residency, and practicing of any economic activities which leads to the unification of GCC work regulations and thus speed up the establishment of the GCC common market.

### Recommendations for Further Study

When looking at the expatriate issue in the UAE, it may be helpful to examine it in a broader context (albeit at the GCC regional level) such that common trends can be more fully examined. Beyond its borders (and inclusive of the UAE), the expatriate workforce in the GCC is estimated to be at 17 million workers and the number may reach 30 million by 2018. This trend reflects the dangerous effects which the current demography of the UAE (and GCC countries at large) can impose on security in the future. More research needs to be done to address related issues which also affect UAE national (and GCC Regional) security.

First, it might be relevant to study the impact of creating a Center for Demographic Studies specialized in addressing problems related to GCC demography. Second, the possibility of exploring the feasibility of creating a regional council for the GCC which draws the different strategies related to localization, GCC national security, and economic partnership between GCC members might reveal more effective innovations in drawing in GCC citizens to work and invest in the market. Third, researchers may focus on the dangerous effects and challenges of tourism in the GCC member states and especially the UAE in order to find solutions for such challenges. Fourth, more research must be done on the roles of GCC females in sustainable development and their crucial role in achieving stability in their countries through

promoting and instilling work values in their children. Fifth, intensive research is required to address the effect of foreign languages on Arabic language. Finally, it is vital that researchers shed some light on the risks of having different religions and sects on GCC security and stability.

APPENDIX A

THE DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE AND THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

The Demographic Structure

Nationality	Year: 1975	Percentage	Year: 1995	Percentage	Year: 2006	Percentage
UAE Citizens	210.544	36%	597.000	25%	800.000	22%
Arabs	103.350	19%	292.000	12%	500.000	10%
Asians	229.265	41%	1.435.000	60%	3.000.000	55%
Others	22.417	4%	53.000	2%	700.000	13%
<b>Total</b>	565.576	100%	2.377.000	100%	4.500.000	100%

*Source: General Affairs Magazine, September 1999, 107.*

The table above shows the following:

1. The decrease of the percentage of UAE citizens from 36 percent in 1975 to 22 percent in 2007 which is a very low percentage. On the other hand the Asian population is much higher.<sup>75</sup>
2. The decrease of the percentage of Arab nationalities from 19 percent in 1975 to 10 percent.

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<sup>75</sup>*Itihad Newspaper*. The latest census in 2007 issued by Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce shows that UAE population exceeded 5.5 million, November 12, 2007, 1.

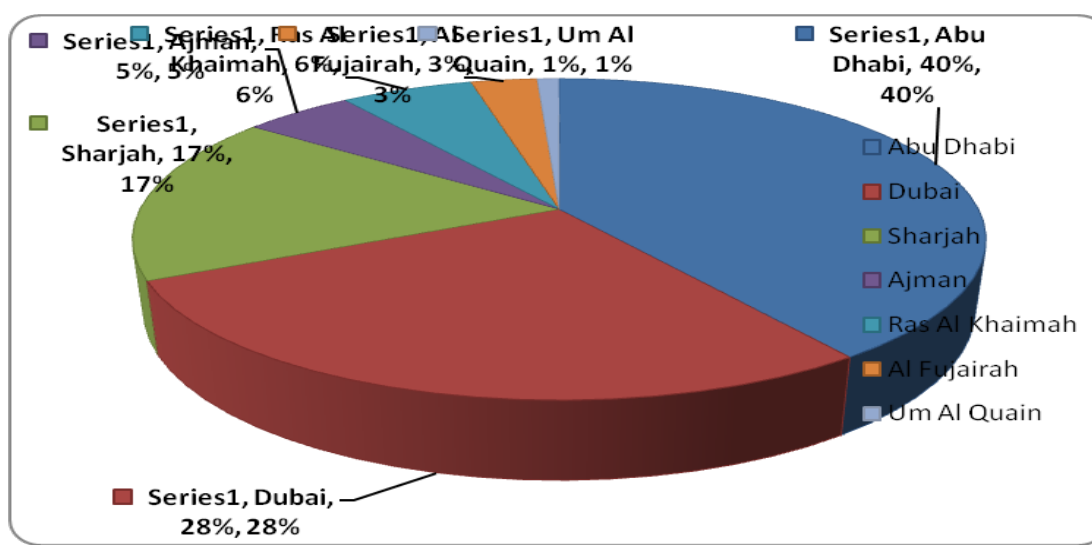
3. The main source for expatriate labor is Asians as they were 60 percent in 1975 and now they represent almost the same percentage.

Demographic Distribution Development According to Nationality

<b>Year</b>	<b>Citizens</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Expatriates</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1968</b>	114.444	63.5%	65.782	36.5%	180.266
<b>1975</b>	187.366	30%	390.521	70%	557.887
<b>1980</b>	290.544	27.9%	751.555	72%	1.024.099
<b>1985</b>	399.707	28.9%	982.757	71.1%	1.382.464
<b>1994</b>	550.002	25.3%	1.619.258	74.7%	2.169.260
<b>1995</b>	588.294	24.4%	1.822.747	75.5%	2.411.41
<b>2000</b>	712.315	22.4%	2.462.345	77.6%	3.174.660

*Source:* United Arab Emirates, National Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.uaestatistics.gov.ae/> (accessed April 25, 2012).

### Population Distribution according to Emirate



Source: United Arab Emirates, National Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.uaestatistics.gov.ae/> (accessed April 25, 2012).

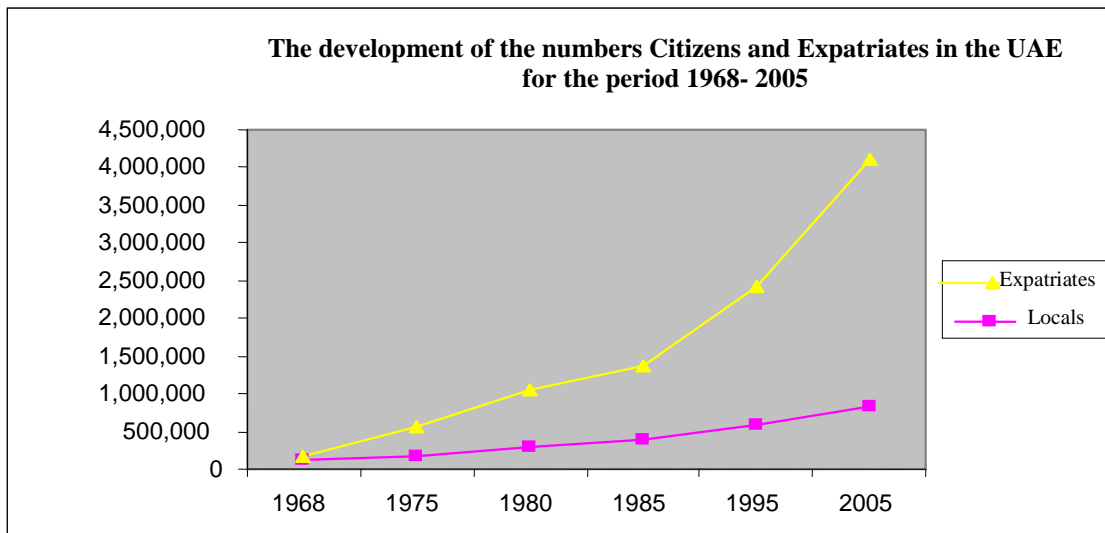
The chart above shows that 85 percent of the population is concentrated in the main cities.

Previous Year	Population of Previous Year 1	Year of Estimation	Natural Increase 2	Net Migration 3	Population Estimate 1+2+3=4
2005	4,106,427	2006	56,486	849,471	5,012,384
2006	5,012,384	2007	60,275	1,146,347	6,219,006
2007	6,219,006	2008	61,024	1,793,596	8,073,626
2008	8,073,626	2009	68,577	57,793	8,199,996

### Population Estimates (2005 to 2009)

Source: United Arab Emirates, National Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.uaestatistics.gov.ae/> (accessed April 25, 2012).

### Population Growth Data in the UAE (1968 to 2005)



*Source:* Ministry of Planning, Population census 1968-2005, Ministry of Economy (Statistics Central Administration), 2007.

## APPENDIX B

### THE LATE SHEIKH ZAYED BIN SULTAN AL NAHYAN'S VISION

Subject	Vision	Source
The Supreme National Objective	Achieve the hopes of UAE citizens in pride, strength, progress and prosperity.	The opening of the first session / first legislative term / February 13, 1972
	Provide a better life for all citizens, and the consolidation of the state's rising, and to achieve progress and prosperity in all fields.	The opening of the second session / second legislative term November 20, 1974.
	To direct all attention on developing a good citizen who is a real value for the state and the saved balance for its present and future.	The opening of the second session / fourth legislative term November 27, 1979
The National Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To preserve the independence and sovereignty of the Union and its security and stability.</li> <li>▪ Defend against any aggression UAE entity.</li> <li>▪ The protection of the rights and freedoms of the people of the Union.</li> <li>▪ Close cooperation between the emirates to achieving their common interest.</li> <li>▪ Ensure prosperity and progress in all areas.</li> <li>▪ Provide a better life for all citizens.</li> </ul>	The opening of the first session / first legislative term February 13, 1972

Subject	Vision	Source
The National Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each member of the Emirates must respect the independence and sovereignty of the other emirates regarding their internal affairs within the scope of this constitution.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The achievement of equality, social justice and provide security and tranquility and equal opportunities for all citizens.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The achievement of economic development, increase production and raise living standards and prosperity of the citizens.</li> </ul>	The opening of the second session / first legislative term November 2, 1972.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To adopt a manufacturing policy and the implementation of projects to ensure diversification of resources of national income, and to increase and build a solid economic base in the future.</li> <li>Accelerated rates of development through a development strategy based on comprehensive scientific planning and benefit from specialized international expertise.</li> <li>Achieving happiness, progress and prosperity for every citizen in the country</li> </ul>	The opening of the second session / second legislative term November 20, 1974.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the lives of citizens and secure their children's present and future.</li> </ul>	The opening of the session the first / third legislative term March 1, 1977.



<b>Subject</b>	<b>Vision</b>	<b>Source</b>
Gulf security	The security and stability of the Gulf region is the responsibility of its people, and the achievement of stability requires fruitful and sincere cooperation among its members other countries which seek peace and stability on the basis of respect for the sovereignty of States, and resolving outstanding issues between them through dialogue, understanding and mutual accommodation as provided for in international conventions.	Opening of the first session / Ninth Legislative Term February 6, 1993.
	The concept of Gulf security, stability and development in the Gulf region is an indivisible unit. The security and stability of this region to achieve progress and prosperity for its people, imposes the adoption of dialogue to settle disputes between countries, and the need to devote and respect the principles of international law that provide the settlement of disputes between countries in peaceful means, including recourse to the International Court of Justice and respect for state sovereignty and territorial integrity and the inadmissibility of the use of or threat of force to achieve gains or consecration or regional changes.	Opening of the first session / The Tenth Legislative Term December 24, 1995.
	Weapons of mass destruction programs in the Gulf region threaten the security and stability, and involve a serious risks on the future of the peoples of the region, as a result we call to make the Middle East including the Gulf region free of all weapons of mass destruction which include nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery.	Opening of the first session / The Tenth Legislative Term December 24, 1995.

APPENDIX C

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION  
OF MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS

Here is a review of the most important points made in this Convention on migrant workers.<sup>76</sup>

1. Migrant workers shall enjoy treatment equal to nationals of the State in wages and other conditions of employment.
2. States must recognize the right of workers to participate in trade unions, associations, and may not place restrictions on them in exercising their legal activities such as strikes.
3. Migrant workers' children who were born in the State have the right to obtain the nationality and to keep their identity and their culture of origin, and the right of access to education equal to the nationals of the State.
4. Freedom to own property, freedom of thought and beliefs.
5. The need to facilitate the participation of workers in the domestic affairs of communities and their enjoyment of political rights is permissible.
6. The state must do the necessary arrangements to reunify workers and their family members.

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<sup>76</sup>Dr. Hassan Hamdan Al Hakeem, *Itihad Newspaper*, edition 9316.

7. No person may be arrested or detained without informing the embassies of their countries.

8. The use of control is interpreted as the use of violence in the presence of irregular workers.

## APPENDIX D

### EXPATRIATE LABOR DATA

#### The Educational Status of Expatriate Labor in UAE According to Sex

<b>Educational Status</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Total</b>
Illiterate	Males	230887	252512
	Females	21625	
Can read and write	Males	332620	379750
	Females	47130	
Elementary Stage	Males	289736	316714
	Females	26978	
Preparatory Stage	Males	380607	414367
	Females	33760	
Secondary Stage	Males	519553	593790
	Females	74237	
Diploma	Males	89574	114460
	Females	24886	
Undergraduate	Males	278142	361610
	Females	83468	
Graduate	Males	36833	45704
	Females	8871	
Unknown	Males	714	973
	Females	259	
<b>Total</b>	Males	2158666	2.479880
	Females	321214	

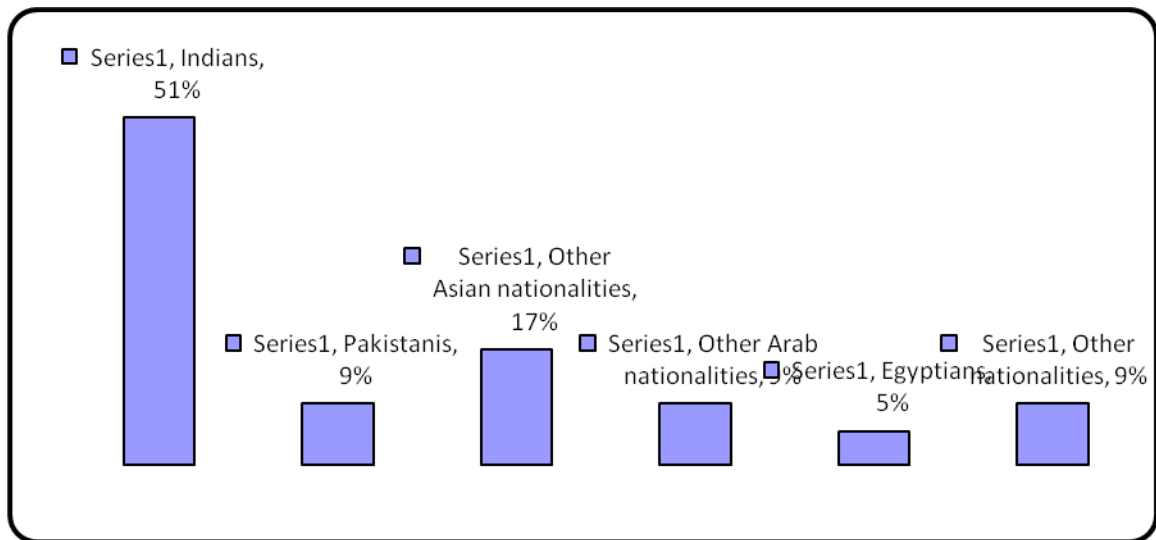
*Source:* United Arabs Emirates, National Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.uaestatistics.gov.ae> (accessed May 12, 2012).

### Expatriate Labor According to Nationality and Educational Status

Nationality Group	Educational Status										
	Total	Doctorate	Master	Above University Diploma	University	Above Secondary & below University	Secondary	Preparatory	Primary	Read and Write	Illiterate
United Arab Emirates	117,012	155	922	1,270	45,547	12,799	45,842	7,245	1,999	998	245
GCC Countries	6,051	7	36	39	681	238	3,766	734	321	175	54
Other Arab Countries	337,791	1,169	4,913	4,976	116,776	34,001	101,152	34,922	15,905	20,945	3,032
Asian Countries (Non Arab)	2,507,792	860	18,526	16,583	246,990	105,206	682,446	458,988	376,507	358,894	242,792
African Countries (Non Arab)	17,371	6	174	247	2,960	1,158	7,754	2,409	2,057	444	162
European Countries	32,293	367	1,517	1,458	17,347	3,455	8,149	0	0	0	0
North American Countries	6,796	74	583	367	4,446	328	998	0	0	0	0
Central American and Caribbean Countries	651	0	6	1	362	7	275	0	0	0	0
South American Countries	507	5	25	172	164	41	100	0	0	0	0
Oceanic Countries	3,519	26	841	250	1,624	141	637	0	0	0	0
Not Stated	2,712	0	3	1	836	249	701	523	214	130	55
Total	3,032,505	2,669	27,546	25,264	437,733	157,623	861,820	504,821	397,003	381,586	246,340

Source: United Arabs Emirates, National Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.uaestatistics.gov.ae> (accessed May 12, 2012).

### The Percentages of Foreign Workers Remittances in the UAE



*Source:* Information and Decision Making Support Centre, May 2008.

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